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TO RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0572  
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3901

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000157

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SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OTRA](#) [SENV](#) [CW](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: COOK ISLANDS COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR PACIFIC REGIONAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER JOE MURPHY, FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 3, 2007

REF: SUVA 114

¶1. (SBU) Embassy welcomes and grants country clearance to Pacific Regional Environmental Officer Joe Murphy, to travel to Rarotonga, Cook Islands, from February 23 - March 3, 2007. The purpose of this visit is to participate in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Experts' Meeting on Adaptation for Small Island Developing States, February 26 - 28, and to meet with Cook Islands environmental and fisheries officials March 1 - 2.

¶2. (SBU) Embassy point of contact is Political Officer Tod Duran. Contact details are as follows:

Office: 644-462-6043  
Fax: 644-472-3537  
Cell: 027-451-2538  
E-mail: DuranTE@state.gov

Security Assessment  
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¶3. (SBU) The Cook Islands is a Parliamentary democracy in free association with New Zealand, on which they rely for defense and assistance in meeting low-level security threats. The Embassy is not aware of any specific threats to U.S. facilities or personnel at this time in the Cook Islands. However, in light of the worldwide security alert all visitors should heighten their security awareness and report any unusual incidents to the Regional Security Office at the Embassy in Wellington, New Zealand (telephone (64)(4)462-6000, 24 hours/day).

¶4. (SBU) Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the 2002 and 2005 terrorist bombings in Bali, there has been concern that terrorists might seek to take advantage of the low level of security maintained in small island states such as the Cook Islands in order to target tourists in previously safe destinations. New Zealand has worked with the Cook Islands to improve airport security in response to this possibility.

¶5. (U) As a result of recent military action in Iraq, there is a potential for retaliatory actions to be taken against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. Public demonstrations carry the potential for precipitating violence directed at American citizens.

¶6. (SBU) U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert and some have drawn down their dependents and/or personnel. These facilities may temporarily close or suspend public services from time to time for security reasons. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to American citizens. Monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest American Embassy or U.S. Consulate.

¶7. (U) Crime: Appropriate common sense precautions should be taken, especially at night, to avoid becoming a target of opportunity.

¶8. (U) Weather: Severe cyclones present a threat during the hurricane season; however, this is generally only from November to March.

McCormick